

**ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỲ PHỔ ĐỘ
TOÀ THÁNH TÂY NINH**

BÍ PHÁP

THE ESOTERIC DOCTRINE OF CAODAISM

**SERMONS
BY
HIS HOLINESS HỘ PHÁP PHẠM CÔNG TẮC**

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THE ESOTERIC DOCTRINE OF CAODAISM

His Holiness Hộ Pháp

Sermon 01

**Lunar Calendar: 5th Day of the 4th Month, Year of
the Buffalo.**

Gregorian Calendar: May 2nd 1949

From now on, I will preach about Caodaist Esotericism.

This is the most difficult topic to preach upon and the most important one for you Caodaists to comprehend. All Caodaist Dignitaries, especially the divinely ordained ones, know all current religions have been distorted. Why? Because of centuries of corruption to the original messages. As a result, those old religious practices are no longer suitable for human awareness. Moreover, humans are now so mentally advanced that the ancient religious philosophies cannot keep them in moral rectitude any longer. The ethical principles made by religious founders have become too simple for mankind.

Jesus Christ, the most conversationally competent religious founder, who founded Christianity, the latest religion on earth, had enough power to introduce Christian exotericism, which arises from the ethical foundation for mankind. As for esotericism, however, He just told His disciples, especially the twelve Apostles, "There are highly advanced philosophies, which cannot be preached because you cannot comprehend them yet." That is why Christians do

not practice esotericism.

Now, coming through seances, God established His religion (Cao Đài) to improve human morality. Ignoring any worldly powers, In this way he taught His children the secret power of creation. His new religion differs from other ancient religions.

All entities in this universe contain two relevant components. First, the visible laws called exotericism and second, the invisible laws called esotericism. Esotericism is religiously critical because it helps us examine natural principles. All religions, as well as Cao Đài, should have both visible and invisible laws.

Why should visible laws be examined? To understand the invisible laws. If examined thoroughly, visible laws will reveal invisible ones.

To put it another way, take how rice is cooked. First, rice is prepared, rinsed, and boiled. To have a good dish, you have to add an appropriate amount of water and set the fire suitably. Or making a cake, you need flour, sugar and egg. All of them need to be prepared well before being baked so that you can have a delicious cake. All of the ingredients are considered exotericism and the hidden process esotericism.

Similarly, the natural power of creation has its own laws. The ones we can observe are exoteric and the opposing and unseen ones esoteric. It is these invisible laws that decide whether an earthly religion lasts long or does not last.

Having come to earth, God shows both the esoteric and exoteric laws for humans to understand their philosophy. From today, I will first preach exotericism then esotericism in ensuring sermons. A basic knowledge of exotericism will unveil the esoteric dimensions.

I advise you Caodaists not to be indifferent anymore. You have to focus hard on studying Caodaist philosophy in order to gain enlightenment. I should have written some books on this topic, but I think speech is faster than writing. Until next time.

Sermon 02

Lunar Calendar: 9th Day of the 4th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: May 6th 1949

Last time, I explained why we call the laws of this universe exotericism and esotericism. Now I am discussing where the term "Đạo" comes from.

Obviously, God makes laws for all beings in the universe to live accordingly. We humans, however, are granted wisdom, so we realize two opposite sides. What we can determine and manipulate is called "Đời" while what we cannot is called "Đạo". Đạo has been admitted to be so complex to master that Lao Tzu said "Đạo is only a provisional name. It is actually nameless." Đạo, which is God's mysterious power, pushes humans to examine everything to attain God's power.

Urged to investigate things by that mysterious power, humans are subdivided into two categories: materialists and idealists. The materialists are interested in worldly life, so they pay much more attention to human society. Inspired by unfair situations in life, the idealists look in morality, trying to understand the secret natural power.

Living in nature, humans realize they are the wisest beings. Human wisdom urges themselves to find out why they remain alive or where that wisdom goes after their death. That is why there are religions, whose founders have shown people the two ways of life: material (Đời) and religious ones (Đạo). They live with Đời, trying to

comprehend Đạo.

Our physical body, as we know it, does not last forever. Besides, it results in suffering. So why we have to live with that suffering? Doesn't God create our body to badly affects our noble qualities? There must be some reason!

Hence, humans always want to know what they live for, what position they hold in this universe and what their future will be.

The only difference between humans and animals are God gives humans holy spirits so that they can control the world.

Like I said, where there is exotericism, there is esotericism. All religious founders have to respect that principle. A true religion should have both exotericism to help reduce humans suffering and esotericism to help eliminate their incarnation cycles. No matter how advanced it is, a religion with only exotericism is a fake one. In other world, a true religion should help people physically as well as mentally.

Next time, I will talk more about exotericism and esotericism.

Sermon 03

Lunar Calendar: 13th Day of the 4th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: May 10th 1949

Before talking more about religious exotericism and esotericism, I remind you of what I said in the last sermon. God grants humans wisdom, so they study things and realize that there are two crucial ways of life: the material way and

the path of the idealists.

Therefore, humans adopt one of the major lifestyles. First, some people think material life is more important, trying to pursue worldly benefits. Second, others maintain that idealist values should be respected and they seek to perfect themselves morally.

Both concepts are equally reasonable. The idealists establish their own exoteric and esoteric paths and the materialists create their paths as well. Their concepts, however, seem opposed to each other. When we realize that God makes that law which determines human destinies, we might say that the idealists attain their implementation before this law, whilst the materialists decide the law before their implementation.

I am now telling you about religious theories first then the worldly ones later. Last time I promised to talk about esotericism, saying there are two major tendencies: materialism or exotericism and idealism or esotericism. Therefore, there are two important religious theories:

First, religious exotericism, which is based on human life, aims at protecting human wisdom during lifetime or at least passing down for the future of mankind. It is undeniable that each individual living on earth has his own characteristics. Though newly born like an animal, a human is still wiser, having the wisdom handed down by their parents. It is that heredity that develops human races, so mankind becomes more and more civilized, not the other way round.

Additionally, among various races on earth, those intelligent ones undeniably have intelligent children. Hence we cannot see the process of handing down wisdom, but it still takes place. Similarly, esotericism cannot be seen in the world, but we know it.

Take the Buddha, Laozi and Jesus Christ, whose wisdom convincingly exceeds that of any humans on earth, those Holy Beings have accumulated wisdom for countless past

lives. It is that accumulation that decides their religious leadership in the world despite the fact that they possess the same physical bodies as we do.

Those two points belong to esotericism. Now I am discussing religious exotericism. How do religious scholars who study material life discover these laws? They find those laws that follow the laws of the universe. That is, they live according to natural laws.

Nature decides that they have to do so to reserve human instinct. Humans live and pass down their ethical codes for human future.

Humans have examined things, understanding that since they appeared on earth over a million years ago, they have made lots of progress thanks to wisdom granted by God. Taking orders from God, they make the material world better and better. They follow the motto “Nhứt nhứt tân hựu nhứt tân” ¹by our Vietnamese forefathers. That is the law of progress in the universe.

To protect material life, religions have introduced the law of love as their foundations. Based on love, life has been continuing so far. Religious people live their worldly lives, keeping themselves moral so that they can lead other beings. When they die, their second bodies or their peri-spirits will go to heaven. That is the esotericism God teaches humans on earth.

Last time, I said a religion should be spiritual enough, should give concrete evidence of the spiritual world or should protect human souls. Unable to do so, it is only a fake religion.

Mankind has been shown to pursue that spiritual achievement though it is invisible. Caodaism is spiritually powerful enough to execute its responsibility of salvation. No one dares say Caodais Esotericism is invented by a person or a religious founder with a physical body. It is God, the Creator of the universe, who saves humanity with that

¹ Every new day is better than the day before.

esotericism.

Sermon 04

Lunar Calendar: 12th Day of the 5th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: June 8th 1949

In my last sermons, I sketched out religious exotericism and esotericism. I will discuss this in more detail and just now I am continuing my talk about secular exotericism and esotericism.

Like I said, people pursue two major ways of life: the material life or the spiritual way. I told you about how people manage to survive; peace and war consecutively have influenced human development ever since.

In prehistoric times, humans had a lot of difficulties. They did not know how to build houses, so they had to shelter in caves. They were easily killed by wild animals and natural disasters, so they grouped to fight. Then, they fought not only against wild animals but also against other people. Next, increasing population forced them to form nations.

It was hard to keep a society in order because everyone wants to defend themselves first. That is why there are laws

and law enforcers. Law enforcement, however, is so difficult because humans nowadays always prefer freedom. Intelligent enough, they find out various ways to fight against what deprives themselves of their freedom. Consequently, laws are always broken either directly or indirectly. As a result, it is extremely hard to ensure the security of the social realm.

At first there were wars between tribes, then countries and then the whole world at last. The more population, the more wars! Like China, so crowded is it that wars were made throughout its history.

Humans have defeated whatever deprives themselves of their own rights. They never give up until they attain that freedom. If brutal power is still used in self-defense, there is no peace in the world. Unfortunately, the present warlike world shows that there are no true laws - none which properly satisfy people's desire.

Hence, it is those laws which elevate the people's wishes **that** will survive human advancements and eternally secure their happiness. Those laws constitute a true secular exotericism.

Sermon 05

Lunar Calendar: 22nd Day of the 5th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: June 18th 1949

Tonight, I will talk about secular esotericism because I have already spoken about secular exotericism the last time we met. I would like to elaborate upon esotericism so that you, the children of God, can tell the difference between truth and falsehood.

It is generally thought that there is no esotericism in the secular world. Yet there is, but it is usually hidden, for example, those causes that have made great men and women improve the world. Those celebrated persons always have a wish: to be remembered and admired by younger generations before or after their death. To realize their dream, they try to serve their community, their country or the whole world. If they decide to serve people, they work based on their true heart. Their activities are relevant to religious practice because wholehearted service is actually a religious practice.

“Without the secular life, religion lacks strength; without religion, secular life lacks power.” announces God. The two concepts should be mutually compatible with each other all the time. They are absolutely inseparable. Lots of effort has gone into proposing theories to separate them but these have been in vain. Care Litaire², for instance, was desperate to leave the Roman Catholic Church, but completely failed. To put it another way, these people and the contemporary situation always wants to step away from religion and/or spiritualness, but they cannot.

For a long time, the Russian government has adopted Communism and atheism, denying God. Against any moral codes, they have introduced the Three-No Policy³, the leading principle of which is atheism. They have decided to overthrow all religious ethics for their purpose of materialism. They, however, still have not been able to do so. Having gained power and established the Russian Soviet Republic in 1917, Stalin oppressed all religious activity in the country. Finally, all Christian churches are now being revived.

In spite of constant human efforts to be independent from religion, they have never been able to succeed. They

² On occasion His Holiness Hộ Pháp makes references in his sermons to contemporary events. We suspect that this is what he is doing here with his reference to "Care Litaire." Unfortunately we could not find reference to this figure in our present research

³ No family, no country, no religion.

are surely aware that the people cannot be governed without religious morality - even though religion partly reduces their political power. Since time immemorial, nobody has been able to rule a nation on earth without the existence of religion. That is why our Vietnamese ancestors always emphasized morality when talking about politics. Based on Confucianism, they always taught the younger generations to carry out:

1. The investigation of phenomena.
2. Enthusiastic learning.
3. Sincerity.
4. The rectitude of purpose.
5. Self-development.
6. Family discipline.
7. Local self-government, and,
8. Universal self-government.

It is thanks to the relation with religion that the greats are still remembered and admired.

In Asia, the kings always canonized the mandarins who had died for the country; they had temples built for them. In Western countries, the statues of celebrated people are placed in public sites to serve as role models. This is a practice similar to religious ones, and so it can be dubbed secular esotericism.

All the current rulers of the world dream of one thing: to be remembered for the good they have done. That is why a lot of people have been willing to suffer a great deal fighting for their fatherland. Despite unexpected setbacks that wish still forces them to continue their work.

Hence, I again affirm that secular esotericism is being memorialized and admired by future generations.

Additionally, there is an invisible, but frightening thing, which is word of mouth. Some events, which are by some means unable to be recorded in history, are spread by spoken communication. This is what prevents

politicians from behaving badly. This precious sort of esotericism, which God grants humans, really lasts a long time. That is the utmost esotericism.

Sermon 06

Lunar Calendar: 26nd Day of the 5th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: June 22nd 1949

From now on, I will continue my talk by discussing religious exotericism and esotericism. Before dealing with this important philosophy, however, I would like you to carefully ponder where we live, what we are doing on earth and what is your viewpoint towards other beings.

Each of you should examine yourself in order to comprehend the mystical secret of religious exotericism and esotericism. Self-examination is the key that opens the door to your original soul. God's children, let us hold the key in our hand, opening that door to see the way of liberation, freeing ourselves from the cycle of reincarnation.

I will first examine myself to see what my secular and religious life are. I will tell you why I joined Caodaist community and why I worship God. I think it is essential to answer such questions – such as why do we Caodaists enter this temple each night, saying prayers, and what benefits does God grant us when we belong to Caodaism? Without satisfactory answers, what you are doing now is just singing your favorite songs in a temple; it is not practicing Caodaism.

How do you determine the worth of your religious practice, how do you dare to sacrifice your secular life and decisively live with other Caodaists? Some people practice a religion without knowing what the truth is. That is why some religions on earth have been abandoned.

Now I am telling my story, hoping you will do the same for yourselves. This is the reason why I joined Caodaism. Before becoming a Caodaist, I had never believed anyone or anything except my own logical judgment. I had never let anyone brainwash me or fool me - although I was a Catholic then. Being a sickly child, whose other siblings had died of even minor diseases, I was taken to a Catholic priest to be his adopted son⁴. I grew up going to a Catholic school and I was a choirboy. I had, however, been sent to a school to learn Chinese-Vietnamese first before learning French. Though that mixed up my studies a little bit, I got into the good habit of learning everything I encountered. I always tried to study something without eating or sleeping until I thoroughly mastered it. The more complicated an issue was; the harder I tried to examine it. I felt somebody encouraging me to understand the secret of the universe.

Having gotten a job, I saw my peers struggling to survive in a troublesome society. They, as well as I, struggled to move up the bureaucratic hierarchy without knowing whether that was happiness or suffering. On the way towards achieving happiness, we saw our beloved family and friends consecutively die. I cried my eyes out for them young and old, and I hated the invisible power that caused their death. Suffering forced me to seek some way to stop that series of unhappy events.

I also thought there were billions of lives, including my own on earth who were equally unhappy. Sometimes people killed others just because they wanted to protect their own lives. Those who got killed were very, very sad, but the killers

⁴ In Asia, it is believed that evil spirits, who cause diseases, cannot harm a priest's adopted children.

did not mind. I could witness those unjust situations all around me and I wanted to comfort the oppressed.

I myself did not kill, but I did fight against other people for survival. Whenever I ate some food or wore some clothes, perhaps that resulted in my peers being deprived of those things at the same time. Instead of being helpful, I indirectly stole their things. I considered that a crime. Hence, I asked myself whether I could live without food or clothes. No, that was absolutely impossible! Eventually, my resolution was to put my soul in the hands of the Invisible Being, the Cao Đài or God, and thanks to His power I tried to seek a way to protect everyone.

However, why Cao Đài? I have looked into other religions and felt unsatisfactory. Being a Buddhist, for example, you enter a pagoda, saying prayers and you live on offerings. That is the most evil way of life because you do not have to work; nevertheless you still live on things for which the needy are so desperate. Some cults are even worse in cleverly stealing people's possessions.

Fortunately, while I was feeling very depressed, God came to me by spiritual means. Thanks to that experience, I did not need to seek any more. Without God, I would have gone mad thinking about this disgusting rat race. At first, though I did not know who He was, He ordained me as Hộ Pháp⁵ and I accepted without any objection.

Why was the Supreme Being able to convince lots of people including me? He introduced the cause that you should help rather than struggle against others. My friends, brothers, and my colleagues unanimously followed Him. I thought God called not only myself but also those who had the same religious view as I did. And I thought there would be millions more who would follow Him. Therefore, I would not be an unhappy man nor a lonely Caodaist. There were people who knew my limitless love and intentionally helped the people who suffered much. That was the reason why I

⁵ The Law Protector, Guarder of the Law, Defender of the Law.

became one of God's disciples.

I did not care whether Cao Đài was a genuine or fake religion, but I was interested in the fact that a Divine Being could collect a million disciples or so in such a short time. He must be the Supreme Being or God. I firmly believed I would see my best friends and my ancestors when I left my physical body and this planet to return to heaven. I believed I would know what heaven looked like when I get to it. That would prove my soul exists and disprove what has been always said in atheists' propaganda on this planet. I would be happiest to come back to heaven with millions of other souls. I did not know how powerful God was, but He would let me make friends with billions of divine beings in heaven.

Therefore, I joined Caodaism to serve His children, that is to say to serve Himself. This is the reason why I have followed God ever since. Now from this podium, I tell you the whole truth so that you can consider it for yourselves.

My friends, I have used the key mentioned before to open the door to my soul. What about you? Do it for yourself – and then I will tell you more about Caodaist exotericism and esotericism.

Sermon 07

Lunar Calendar: 29nd Day of the 5th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: June 25th 1949

My friends, tonight I will discuss (Thể Pháp Thiên Đạo Cao Đài) Caodaist Exotericism. Last time, you and I both examined our lives. We did this in order to see our true behavior to the universe. I think all of you can determine why we live on earth as I did on this podium last time.

According to the teachings of God, all souls come down to this world for one of three of the following reasons:

1. To pay off karmic debts. Most souls come to the earth as well as to other planets in the universe to pay back the karmic debts they generated in their previous incarnations. Generally, in the divine evolution of the universe, a soul is not powerful enough to control his/her behavior, so he/she may commit some crime.

2. To further education. Some souls want to get more knowledge of their original incarnations or learn about the secret mechanism of creation.

3. To gain higher divine status. The rule of the universe always forces every soul to develop itself on the Path to Eternal Life.

Like I said before, life exists not only on this 68th planet but also on many other planets, and the rules of life are all the same. On some more advanced planet than ours there may be less crime but the reasons for souls to go there are unchanged.

Having examined yourselves, you may realize you are not having a happy life at all. Actually, our life is only a program of study to take in the multi-class course that God (or any religious founder) holds for humans. And the first class is about how to beat the suffering that accompanies living. No one except God has been able to pass this class so far. The Buddha, who was the Religious Leader in the World of Ultimate Bliss, could elaborate the Four Sufferings but he could not eradicate these sufferings Himself.

Hence, the first class is how to beat Suffering of Living (then Old Age, Sickness and Death). The laws which reduce people's suffering are good; those laws which cannot are bad

or fake. As a result, any religious laws which are not useful in reducing human suffering are worthless.

Let us look at contemporary religions to see what they have done to eliminate human suffering. God, together with other divine beings, has taught us that all the organizations of the universe should somehow serve living beings. Based on that rule, we can determine whether a religion is good or bad. Obviously, the religion which uses people for their own purpose is the fake religion.

Presently, most religions on this planet do not serve people by eliminating human unhappiness. Ironically, most priests think they can stop people's sorrow by just sitting and saying prayers!

Eradication of unhappiness in life should be the top priority for a true religion to take. Speech is less important than action on this issue.

In society, lots of organizations have been established to help reduce the Four Sufferings as elaborated by the Buddha. For example, maternity hospitals, nursing homes, general hospitals, and funeral homes are built everywhere. Most of them, however, primarily serve political authorities.

Now how about Caodaism? What does God want us to do? God wants us to devote our bodies, minds and souls to His Divine Body⁶, which in turn serves His children. It is this practice that will really eradicate human suffering.

Being a Caodaist Leader, how have I put that theory into practice? At first, I have improved people's way of life by building a hospital, a nursing home, a maternity hospital, etc. These have been the tools for Caodaists, together with non-Caodaists, to help each other in the prevailing chaotic situation.

The Caodaist community has become an extended family, whose number of members is now two million or so.

Living and old age are not focused on suffering anymore, but are now what makes our life more

⁶ The Caodaist Sacerdotal Council.

sophisticated. Sickness and death are no longer the source of unhappiness, but are now what helps us gain higher status in heaven.

We Caodaists spend our entire lives serving people up until we die. Generally, people are afraid of death, so they are always worried and unhappy. On the other hand, we know our lives are predestined by God, so we do not care about death. Death is considered the way of liberation.

Being a Caodaist priest, we are willing to work like servants for humanity, so we do not need to indulge in a material life. Our values of living are different from what others can imagine. Death means we have fulfilled our responsibilities as predestined by God. Therefore, death means that we are free to return to heaven.

We are now in God's temple, working to serve humankind. Death does not matter to us anymore, and neither do the three other sufferings (Living, Old Age and Sickness). Hence, Caodaism has eradicated our sufferings once and for all.

We should live for God - it is not good to live for ourselves - we should devote ourselves to God's Holy Body. Belonging to the Caodaist community means that we are God. Since God is never unhappy, we avoid unhappiness for good. Also, we are so lucky to live in the unusual age of Caodaism, the age for greater values of religious morality. Such a life cannot be considered the life of sorrow.

In conclusion, at a secular level Caodaist Exotericism may be more suitable for mankind nowadays than other religions. We, however, should not be overconfident. We should always consider if we trying our best, each and every day, to do what God wants. If we are intelligent and competent enough to live as God wants us to do, the Four Sufferings depicted by the Buddha are not that important.

By practicing Caodaist Exotericism, you can easily overcome suffering. And if you succeed in practicing Caodaist Exotericism then you can succeed in practicing Caodaist

Esotericism.

Sermon 08

Lunar Calendar: 4th Day of the 6th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: June 29th 1949

My friends, tonight I will discuss how esotericism relates to exotericism or, more understandably, how religious law relates to secular law.

We know that the universal principle of God is that everything is created to serve living beings. I have reminded you that soil has to sacrifice itself to feed vegetation. Then that vegetation is then fed to animals, including humans, who are even more superior. That is why ancient laws force animals to serve humanity. Unfortunately, humans erroneously think they should kill animals for food.

Then at a higher level, humanity has to serve God. Do you remember that people were killed, burned, and then offered to God in the distant past? According to religious history, sacrifice was practiced for a rather long time (40,000 years). As a result, the number of victims must have been too large to count! About 6,000 years ago, according to Hebrew law, animals were sacrificed and offered to God instead. Somewhere on earth people are still doing the same today. Is that God's requirement? No, I am sure it is not. God Himself creates and nourishes living beings, so it does not make sense that He requires us to sacrifice them.

It is true that the universal law of service exists in all realms from material things to humankind. Take a beehive or

a termite colony, the queen bee and the termite queen are the ones who serve their community the best because they lay eggs to preserve their species. 150,000 years ago, calling their ancestors "Manu" (Sanskrit for human progenitor), humans imitated the organization of the beehive and the termite colony to form their societies.

Any nation in the world should have a law system by which it can operate. To execute that law there should be a governing body whose leader is the King, the President - or whatever title. The governing body should help that national leader actually serve the people. Politics is all about serving the people.

Now what about God? How does He serve all living beings in the universe? His method is to have living beings serve themselves. God grows vegetation and animals in order to serve humans. God's service is like that of a national leader. In our time, Caodaism is established, - it serves everyone on this 68th earth, and God forms His court on earth - the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council.

Now we realize what authority is like. The queen bee, the termite queen or the human king are supreme leaders thanks to the service that they give. Even God has to serve all living beings. Consequently, good service produces authority.

The Caodaist Sacerdotal Council is actually God's court on earth, so it has all the titles of those in God's court in heaven. Caodaist Dignitaries are equivalent of Angels, Saints, Immortals and Buddhas in heaven. Like a king, who pays his mandarins, God will pay the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council by giving them heavenly status.

God came and urged humans, especially the Vietnamese people to sign the Third Covenant – this promises to give divine status as a payment - but on the condition that they are willing to serve all the living beings on this 68th planet.

Sermon 09

Lunar Calendar: 8th Day of the 6th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: July 3rd 1949

Tonight, before talking about how Caodaist Esotericism relates to Caodaist Exotericism, I again remind you of a vital thing which you must remember and follow. Last time I said that the basic law of the universe stipulates that mankind exists on earth in order to lead as well as to serve all living beings. Consequently, our human fate is to serve other living beings. Without this service, humans work themselves against morality and will not be able to free themselves from the cycle of reincarnation.

I also elaborated upon the hypocritical intention of secular politics. Politicians generally say they will help reduce the Four Sufferings, and they woo the people in this way to achieve greater status. They borrow the idea of eradication of sorrow from religion, but they do not really serve the people. Unlike them, we religious men are predetermined to help reduce human suffering and we have to attain that goal without any demands.

Our intention is different from that of politicians, so secular life (politics) can never conjoin with the religious life (religion). We religious people never want authority. We practice a religion because we want to fulfill our destiny. That's the only thing we want – even though politicians are always saying that we steal their authority. Actually, it is politicians that usually trick people into obeying their orders.

Well, I want to make it clear again that our duty is to serve the people, to help them get rid of the Four Sufferings as identified by the Buddha.

Now that we understand the close relation between religious exotericism and esotericism, you may comprehend why I have forced you to constantly attend Caodaist services. I haven't done this for my own benefit. It's my responsibility to facilitate the achievement of your own enlightenment.

Additionally, I previously told you there are three reasons why people incarnate on earth. First, they have to pay off their karmic debts. Second, they further their education for their evolutionary process. Third, they want to attain higher divine positions. Regardless of what reason, people must serve all living beings in order to accomplish their mission.

If you continue to listen to me further, you will see that God never uses His authority. He comes to give His children authority, but will not let them overuse it.

Serving others is the way to liberate ourselves from the cycle of reincarnation. You surely do not know to whom you owed a debt from your previous lives. However, while you are serving other people, you may, if predestined by God, encounter your creditor and finally pay off your debt.

For those who come to earth to study how heaven operates, these souls must also serve other living beings. Their work will show them what they want to achieve.

Nothing is better than serving living beings on behalf of God. To do so we are taught to offer our three treasures (physical body, mind and soul) to God so that these may be used as tools to serve all living beings.

Every day, we pray to God and to the Tam Giáo⁷ so that we may offer our body, our mind, and our soul, in order that these treasures may belong to God, and are not our own anymore. This will mean that now we only pay back rather than cause more karmic debts. Being a member of His Holy Body (the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council), we are now part of God. If something bad happened to us it will not be our fault. When we return to heaven, we can say we have offered

⁷ Three Religions: Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

ourselves to God, so what we have done on earth will not be our selfish actions anymore. The only thing we need to do now is observe the Caodaist Canonical Codes.

Taking God's orders, we become a servant to all living beings, we commit no more crime, and we become liberated from karmic debts.

God tells us not to live for ourselves and we obey Him. It is we that determine our fate and free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death.

Sermon 10

Lunar Calendar: 11th Day of the 6th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: July 6th 1949

Tonight, I will resume talking about the relation between Caodaist Exotericism and Esotericism. First, I will tell you why God established Thánh Thể (the Holy Body) or the Caodaist organization.

You should understand what the Holy Body is and why our Tam Bửu (three treasures) are used within this Holy Body. The three treasures are combined into one, that is our self. It is similar to the three powers of the universe: Phật, Pháp, Tăng⁸, which are combined into one - this is God.

The first treasure is our physical body.

The second treasure is our mind, which is also called the perispirit. This part comes from Kim Bân⁹ or, to put it another way, is born by Phật Mẫu¹⁰.

⁸ Buddha, Dharma, and Humans.

⁹ The Golden Vessel.

¹⁰ God the Mother.

The third treasure is our soul, which comes from God.

These three parts constitute a human.

The Buddha from India said a human is made up of three parts and called our original self "ego". Confucianism calls it Tâm¹¹. In short, that is our soul which is granted by God.

Because we are composed of those three parts, we have three debts from the moment we are born in this world. We cannot attain enlightenment, enter the eternal realm, or have a higher divine status without paying off these debts.

First, we have to pay off the debt we owe to our parents. This is the same debt our parents had to paid because of what they owed to our grandparents. And it is fair for everyone to repay this obligation. Additionally, thanks to society, we have to have the necessary things for our life to continue, so this is another debt to pay. God says, by serving people, we can pay off all of these debts and He established **Caodaism** to enable us to serve people. It is, of course, natural for people to try to avoid paying their debts. They are always trying this. Now God urges people to fulfill their obligations in service to humanity. And to facilitate their payment, God established Caodaism.

Secondly, we also owe a debt to God the Mother, for she gives birth to our perispirit or our second body. That is why we Caodaists worship God the Mother. When we respectfully genuflect and pray to Her, we offer our physical body, mind and soul to be used for the project of a great salvation.

Our third creditor is God, who shares out His Great Soul for all of us. Thanks to this, we humans are more sacred than the other animals. Therefore, remember that something of God is always inside us and we have to imitate what God has done in order to follow in His footsteps.

Reality proves beyond any doubt that God serves all living beings, so we should work the same way.

Having paid off these three debts, we will be free to

¹¹ The heart (scholars tend to translate this as "heart/mind" in English).

return to the eternal realm after death.

Sermon 11

Lunar Calendar: 18th Day of the 6th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: July 13th 1949

Previously, I told you religion and secularity are two opposing factors. That opposition comes from the nguyên khí¹² of all beings and of all things in the universe.

Philosophically speaking, our body appears on earth because of desire, which is the most important of the seven human feelings (joy, love, satisfaction, anger, hatred, sorrow and desire). The feeling of desire controls all of the other feelings.

The souls of the universe can be put into two categories: Tiểu Chơn Hồn (junior souls) and Đại Chơn Hồn (senior souls). The former includes the souls of the material world, the souls of vegetation, and the souls of animals. The latter includes the souls of gods, the souls of Saints, the souls of Immortals, and the souls of Buddhas.

Human souls are a little special because they can be either junior or senior, depending on an individual's desire. Obviously, a person can decide to become an animal or a Buddha, so there is a constant struggle between animal (evil) and Buddha (good) in our mind.

Similarly, there is the same conflict in human society. Religious people want to follow the Buddha while secular people want to follow the animalistic. The fact that theism

¹² Primordial energy.

remains in opposition to materialism has been an unsolved problem so far. Even the Buddha could not solve it. You may want to know if it is solved this time when God comes and founds Caodaism? Yes, it surely is! God distinctly shows these two ways of life to His children, telling them to make a sensible choice according to their true soul. They can become whatever they want to be, a Buddha or an animal.

Presently, mankind is suffering so much. It is even on the verge of self-destruction, but the problem still has not been solved yet. Besides, the force of the animal is still more powerful than the force of a Buddha. Founded more than 2,500 years ago, Buddhism is losing its control over the animalistic tendencies inside humans. Therefore, people around the world struggle like animals and self-destruction will be inevitable sooner or later. If humans become wise enough, we can prevent that.

The Caodaist esotericism I am discussing is nothing less than the offering of directions to you so that you can make a proper self-evaluation. Imagine a prince, who will succeed his father – he does not know what a king should be or what a king should do. How then can he be a good ruler?

As soon as God's children understand His teachings, make proper self-evaluation and take their religious responsibilities seriously, the Caodaist community is kept in order and the security God grants humans is ensured.

Presently the Caodaist community is too chaotic, that's why people thought it was a superstitious organization. As bold as brass, some groups of Caodaist adherents established the so-called Tả Đạo Bàng Môn¹³. They make a false self-evaluation and have the mistaken idea that they are major saviors of the world.

Since esotericism is extremely important, I want to publicize it as much as possible. From now on, I will only

¹³ A fake religion.

preach about it on the days of Sóc Vọng¹⁴, when more Caodaist adherents attend the ceremonies. If you are too lazy to come, I will only tell you these things when you are let into Nhà Tĩnh.¹⁵

Sermon 12

Lunar Calendar: 29th Day of the 7th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: August 8th 1949

Tonight, I will resume my talk about Caodaist esotericism.

To understand the mystery of esotericism, we must first figure out what we are and how we are affected by esotericism.

What are we as humans? How important are we in the universe? Where are we from? God has come and taught us that the secret mechanism of the universe is represented by the composition of a human. A human is the combination of three elements called Tam Bửu (three treasures): the body, the perispirit, and the soul.

I affirm that nothing in the universe is not created by the limitless power of God. And everything has to be active for our eternal evolution. All the planets, as well as ours, have to spin and rotate forever - or life comes to an end. Their movement is from the explosion of Thái Cực¹⁶ at the beginning of the universe. This explosion created innumerable planets, including our 68th planet, which

¹⁴ The first and fifteenth days of a lunar month.

¹⁵ The Caodaist Meditation House.

¹⁶ The Absolute.

gradually cooled off and then life began. All of us humans came from and are affected by the energy of that explosion. When we grow old and die, we return to that boundless primeval energy. The power of Thái Cực causes both visible and invisible beings and things in the universe to transform endlessly.

So, I will tell you what our three treasures are. Firstly, Our body is actually an animal. Biologically, it is true that our body is the same as a monkey, a dog, a cow or a water buffalo.

Secondly, in addition to our physical body, God the Mother grants us a perispirit when we are a fetus. When our father's sperm combines with our mother's egg in her uterus, it starts developing our physical body. At that time, our perispirit is still outside, following our Mother everywhere. That is why a morally-upright pregnant mother is always protected wherever she goes. As soon as we are born, our perispirit combines with our physical body to form a complete human. This perispirit is still at the first stage of development called Tiểu Hồn¹⁷. All perispirits in the universe tend to develop from the lowest level (material) to the highest one (Buddha). When our perispirit combines with our physical body, it is forced to forget all of our experiences from former incarnations by God the Mother. Then it, together with our body, grows as a normal human. It is interesting that the more moral we were in former incarnations, the nicer our perispirit looks in the present incarnation. Therefore, our Confucian forefathers said, "It's hard to live a moral life. If you were moral enough in all of your incarnations, you will have a beautiful appearance." And according to Buddhism, sinners can never escape the appropriate punishments in Hell even though their perispirits are also created by God the Mother as with everyone.

Thirdly, the last treasure is our soul which is granted by

¹⁷ Or Tiểu Chơn Hồn, which have the same characteristics as those of material objects, vegetation, and animals.

God. It is the soul that decides whether a human is good or evil. If our soul is powerless, we become evil beings. The soul is also the force that motivates a person to attain Buddhahood. Generally, mankind will stay on this planet until they attain enlightenment.

Humans have been on earth for 1,500,000,000 years or so. For the first 100,000,000 years they were dã nhơn¹⁸, who could not live with the soul granted by God. Having evolved into humans, now they can.

The perispirits created by God the Mother have been with humans since the Creation, but the souls granted by God have only been with them for 50,000 years. God came with us after God the Mother. Similarly, only when we are ten years old do we become close to our father.

God the Mother gives us a perispirit, which is the lowest level of evolution called Tiểu Hồn. As soon as God grants us a soul, we attain a higher level called Đại Hồn¹⁹. A typical adult has a physical body, a soul and a perispirit. The perispirit acts like a translator for the body and the soul. Take an airplane, for example. Its wings and fuselage are the body, the propellers are the perispirit and the pilot is the soul.

To understand God's esotericism, study how our soul influences our body and perispirit. Next time I will begin discussing esotericism.

Sermon 13

¹⁸ Anthropoids.

¹⁹ Tiểu Hồn and Đại Hồn or Tiểu Chơn Hồn (junior souls) and Đại Chơn Hồn (senior souls).

The former includes the souls of material objects, the souls of vegetation, and the souls of animals. The latter includes the souls of gods, the souls of Saints, the souls of Immortals, and the souls of Buddhas.

Lunar Calendar: 15th Day of the 8th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: October 6th 1949

Today is the Ceremony of Hội Yến Diêu Trì²⁰, which manifests the esotericism established by God for His genuine religion. On this occasion, I want to elaborate on it so you, God's children, can understand how it affects our religious achievements on earth. What's more, I want to tell you about my extraordinary belief in God, the Beloved Being, the Creator of the universe, the Eternal Being and Mighty Lord so that you know how much love He gives us.

In the Year of the Buffalo (1925), coming to us as a friend, God adopted a pseudonym which I dare not now use. He made friends with us (The Thượng Phẩm²¹ and myself the Hộ Pháp²²). In a séance during the 12th lunar month of that year, He ordered us to pray to Him for a new religion. It is extremely surprising that we had such strong belief in God that we obeyed immediately. It turned out that God ordered not only Thượng Phẩm and Hộ Pháp but also all the humans on earth, especially the Vietnamese people. This event was witnessed by Mrs. Hương Hiếu, Chánh Phối Sư²³ (who was also Mr. Cao Quỳnh Cư's wife), who thoroughly understood how we felt at that time.

Without any fear or shame, we knelt down, praying for a new religion in the street while lots of passers-by were curiously watching us. Remember that all this took place within a modern and luxurious city. What a challenge it was! We sought to do it because we believed in God. However, we thought we would have been so embarrassed if people had

²⁰ Hội Yến - banquet. Diêu Trì - the gem pond (the realm of God the Mother)

²¹ Mr Cao Quỳnh Cư, one of the Caodaist Leaders in the Caodaist Judicial Body.

²² Mr Phạm Công Tắc, the Leader of the Caodaist Judicial Body.

²³ A Caodaist Senior Dignitary of the Caodaist Executive Body.

known why we did what we were doing.

Then, a friend of mine, a celebrated poet in the South of Vietnam, whose pen name was Bồng Dinh, came along. Surprisingly, he had been very fond of the poems granted by God in previous séances and often made verses with the same rhyme scheme. Though I was rather uneasy, he boldly recited those poems in front of the altar table we had set on the pavement. Attracted by the odd activity, lots of passers-by stopped and watched us curiously. Suddenly the table, which we had used as a tipping table in séances, began to rap. Innumerable Deities, including Religious Founders, came, preaching.

Once we had got used to the new Holy Teachings, we were ordered to throw a vegetarian party for ten divine Beings, who were God the Mother and the Nine Female Buddhas. Mrs. Hương Hiếu²⁴ was the host and Thượng Sanh, Thượng Phẩm, and I were also guests. An altar for God the Mother and nine chairs for the Nine female Buddhas were arranged with dinnerware.

When I asked what party it was, God replied it was Hội Yến Diêu Trì²⁵. I received this answer but without understanding what it was. I just thought and did as God asked because it would be good for the future of the new religion.

We enjoyed the vegetarian food while Mrs Hương Hiếu put food into the bowls for the invisible guests. I still remember a strange thing, which was absolutely confusing at that time.

After the party, the Deities all left and God came. Thượng Phẩm and I curiously asked:

- Were you there when Diêu Trì Cung²⁶ came to the party, Lord?

²⁴ Mr Cao Quỳnh Cư's wife, later a female Caodaist Senior Dignitary.

²⁵ The Banquet of Gem Pond (lit.)

²⁶ The Palace of God the Mother.

- Yes. I have been here since then.
- Did you see them?
- Yes. I myself served them.

Thượng Phẩm asked:

- Did Diêu Trì Cung see you, Lord?
- No, they didn't.
- Why?
- I hid myself using a mysterious mechanism.

I asked with curiosity:

- Can I attain a divine position like my sister's, the Seventh Female Buddha?²⁷
- Yes, you can.

Thượng Phẩm asked:

- How, Lord?
- Practice religion. You can not do it without practicing a religion.

I asked:

- How long?

He kept silent. I asked for a year? Five years? A thousand years? Ten thousand years? A hundred thousand years? He still kept silent, so I stopped asking, thinking that the answer was unknowable.

Female Caodaists, I have just explained what Hội Yến Diêu Trì is. Try to memorize it.

Caodaist Dignitaries and believers, remember this: since

²⁷ In former séances, the Seven Female Buddha had called Hộ Pháp, Thượng Phẩm and Thượng Sanh sworn brothers.

the Đạo²⁸ was closed, the Ngọc Hư Cung²⁹ nullified the divine law and Cực Lạc Thế Giới³⁰ refused admission to heaven, few people have attained enlightenment due to the inappropriate methods that were being used.

According to the ancient divine law, in the ceremony of Nhập Tịch³¹, the souls who return to Diêu Trì Cung³² can enjoy heavenly apricot and wine in Hội Yến Bàn Đào³³ before entering Cảnh Thiên Liêng Hằng Sống³⁴. Alas! Hardly any souls have been able to achieve this privilege thus far.

Nowadays, God chooses to save all of His children, so He makes God the Mother display the esoteric dharma of Hội Yến Diêu Trì in the earthly world – this means that His children can be saved and not have to wait until they return to Diêu Trì Cung. Only God can do such a thing!

Today is the day God the Mother shows the esotericism of salvation to Caodaist believers only. Because of its significance, I always pay lots of attention to the day annually and hope you all will do the same. Since the Creation, no one has been allowed to have the same period of salvation as we have been granted. We have to be extremely grateful to God and God the Mother.

²⁸ Tao, religion.

| ²⁹ The palace where God and His court rule the universe.

| ³⁰ The Paradise of Ultimate Bliss - for those souls who attain Buddhahood.

| ³¹ Divine naturalization.

| ³² The palace of God the Mother.

³³ The Apricot Party.

| ³⁴ Eternity.

Sermon 14

Lunar Calendar: 1st Day of the 9th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: October 22nd 1949

I have promised to preach esotericism on the days of Sóc Vọng³⁵, so today I begin to talk about it. I have to elaborate on some points so that all of God's children can understand the significance of esotericism.

First, I will talk about the fact that God establishes Caodaism for the salvation of all living beings. To achieve that goal, God assigned the Hộ Pháp³⁶ to incarnate in the world and then used the psychic pen to teach him about esotericism. (Some friends of mine in Hiệp Thiên Đài³⁷ wonder why God taught only the Hộ Pháp and not all of His children!). This salvation is actually an examination for all souls in the universe to regain their divine status in heaven after each chuyển³⁸. God calls it the examination of merit-making, during which God assigned Hộ Pháp and Thập Nhị Thời Quân³⁹ to the world in order to open the door to esotericism – this will permit people to attain enlightenment.

Remember that before the Creation, God wanted Vạn Linh⁴⁰ to unite with Nhứt Linh.⁴¹ As soon as God (Buddha) thought this He has held the Pháp (Dharma). Then using the

³⁵ Sóc - the first day of a lunar month. Vọng - the 15th day of the lunar month.

³⁶ Dharma Guardian (lit.) the leader of the Caodaist Judicial Body.

³⁷ The Caodaist Judicial Body.

³⁸ A religious era.

³⁹ The Twelve Zodiacal Lords, the twelve senior dignitaries under the Caodaist Judicial Body who are said to have been ordained by God.

⁴⁰ All souls.

⁴¹ The Soul of God or God.

Pháp, God created beings and things (the Sangha). Thus, Pháp is the master of Vạn Linh or the material world. That is why traditional religions say that the Hộ Pháp has authority over Tam Châu Bát Bộ (as the title goes, Tam Châu Bát Bộ Hộ Pháp Thiên Tôn).

Tam Châu⁴², including Đông Thắng Thần Châu, Tây Ngưu Hóa Châu and Nam Thiệm Bộ Châu are controlled by the Hộ Pháp. The last in this set is called Tứ Đại Bộ Châu⁴³, which is Bắc Cù Lư Châu - this is for evil spirits only. They are there to make atonement and morally perfect themselves for a divine status. The Hộ Pháp is responsible for instruction within the Tam Châu, but he lets evil spirits do whatever they want in Bắc Cù Lư Châu.

Bát Bộ is the eight categories of soul: these are the souls of material things, vegetation, animals, humans, gods, saints, immortals and buddhas. The Hộ Pháp also takes charge of the promotion of the divine positions for these eight categories of souls.

How happy mankind is! How happy all beings are! God has granted humanity on this 68th planet a great privilege. But why did God assign the Hộ Pháp to this task? Truthfully, without esotericism, Caodaism has nothing but a completely fake power. If we practice Caodaism without achieving the ultimate goal, we cannot escape the cycle of reincarnation. Consequently, we only waste our present incarnation.

The Hộ Pháp comes to the world for the promotion of all kinds of souls. A soul can be promoted by one level, for example from a material thing to a piece of vegetation, even to a buddha. That is what the Hộ Pháp is assigned to do. However, God says, "The greater the authority, the more serious the punishment." The Hộ Pháp and Thập Nhị Thời Quân have such authority not only on this planet but also in

⁴² The three divine continents.

⁴³ The Four Great Continents (lit.), which is said to be a realm in heaven, according to Caodaism.

eternal life.

Now I think we should figure out the relationship between God and humans, seeing what God told us to do and what we have done so far.

God wants us to be His visible body or the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council. To put it another way, we work for God to save all living beings. How does God pay us? He shows the way of liberating our souls and grants us divine status. God requires us to offer up our three treasures: Tinh, Khí, Thần (body, mind and soul). Only with those treasures can God establish the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council. God uses flower, wine and tea to represent our body, mind and soul respectively. To tell you the truth, these are the only things we possess that can be considered of worth.

It is interesting to note that God tells us to offer our Tinh, Khí, Thần every day, but we offer only Khí and Thần. Tinh is only offered in Tiểu Đàn⁴⁴ or Đại Đàn.⁴⁵ God knows for sure that we cannot control our body, so He does not insist on it. He allows the body to decide what to do. What mercy our God has for us!

Next time I will talk about our mind and soul.

Sermon 15

Lunar Calendar: 30th Day of the 10th Month, Year of the Buffalo.

Gregorian Calendar: December 12th 1949

Tonight, I stop discussing esotericism. I will explain to you the reason why.

⁴⁴ A lesser ceremony.

⁴⁵ A major ceremony.

Our society is now descending into chaotic because of the fight between materialists and idealists. We Caodaists, dignitaries and believers, belong to God's holy body (the Caodaist community). By His love, God grants us divine status here on earth. God tells us to sign the Third Covenant, showing the spirit of love and justice on behalf of God, so we have to help unite Vạn Linh⁴⁶ and Nhất Linh⁴⁷. Our assignment is to help secular and religious communities harmonize with each other.

Materialism shapes the way of life in secular communities while idealism affects that of religious communities. Logically, we should support idealists due to our religious beliefs, but in this we should not be heavily biased.

Having pondered, we determine that Caodaism needs no supernatural powers for its system of belief. We only need to preach its true philosophy to the world. Since lies have made a terrible mess around the world, we do not need to move with the times anymore. Additionally, as the peacekeeper between materialists and idealists, we'd better not take advantage of any supernatural strength to overcome the power of evil which is dominating the human spirit. It is rumored that some evildoers are planning to devalue God's religion (Caodaism). Frankly, it is not easy to beat those evildoers.

It is I that have a supernatural power which easily strengthens people's belief in God, but I never use it because I consider it immoral and cowardly to do so. I firmly believe this, so I must stop preaching about esotericism.

I just want to be a friend to you, not a leader in the Caodaist community. I do not even accept the title of Buddha, which God has granted me. Hence, there is no need to have a supernatural power in Caodaism. I promise to give

⁴⁶ All living beings.

⁴⁷ God.

you Caodaists good religious instruction only.

Now, I'd like to talk about the significance and enjoyment of human life. Born to be a human in this world, we should thoroughly know what our life is and how interesting it is. Since prehistory mankind has been trying to understand it, so lots of religions have been founded.

Generally, there are two major lifestyles. Some people follow materialism while others adopt idealism. There has been a constant conflict between the two groups. Studying human history, we know such conflicts are due to the different ideologies that have been developing throughout the ages of the world.

In ancient Europe, Socrates' belief turned prominent Athenians against him and they accused him of wrongdoing. In a trial he was sentenced to death by drinking hemlock. Before drinking the poisonous mixture, he calmly said goodbye to his friends, "Beyond this world, there is eternal life. I firmly believe that, so I've been looking forward to my death because it is then that I can talk to philosophers." While dying, he was asked what he would do and where he would go after death. He smilingly answered, "I don't know whether I would be the Lord reigning the universe or just the leg of a grasshopper. I will be whatever God decides."

Mastering the essence of Bát Quái Đồ⁴⁸, Lao-tzu⁴⁹ retreated to Côn Lôn Sơn.⁵⁰ When asked if he would be happy there, he replied, "My knowledge gives me my own enjoyment of life, which cannot be explained to everyone."

When Confucius⁵¹ resigned from the government and returned home to preach to his adherents, lots of people considered it a disaster. Actually, it was when he had worked as a mandarin that was really his time of dissatisfaction. The

⁴⁸ Bagua or the Eight Trigrams.

⁴⁹ An ancient Chinese philosopher, the founder of Taoism.

⁵⁰ Kunlun Shan, a mountain in Chinese mythology.

⁵¹ Chinese philosopher, the founder of Confucianism.

happiest time was when he lived a moral life with his 72 sages and 3,000 followers.

Conversely, Tần Thủy Hoàng,⁵² the most powerful and cruelest Chinese emperor, had everything except immortality. He was so obsessed with acquiring it that he was fooled by many cunning medicine men into drinking weird elixirs. He died, of course, like everyone else.

Napoleon Bonaparte had the opportunity to become Emperor of the French and he conquered all of Europe, but he died in loneliness in prison on the island of Saint Helena in the Atlantic Ocean.

The richest King was Louis XIV - known as the Sun King (Le Roi Soleil). He was most the most admired man in all Europe in his time, but he could not prevent death - not even with his innumerable and loyal guards. Most of his heirs had died before him, so his only heir was his great grand-son.

Like a tiger, a cruel dictator can scare other people, but he will never win the people's hearts. On the contrary, a whale always saves fishermen, so whales are usually worshipped in temples in fishing villages. The former is materialistic and the latter idealistic. Seeing that, you Caodaists must think twice, deciding what way of life is the best for yourselves.

Translators
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February 8th 2018

<https://sites.google.com/site/caodaismmeditation/Home>

⁵² Qin Shi Huang or Shihuangdi, **was** the founder of the Qin dynasty and was the first emperor of a unified China.

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